



Wednesday
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★ **FREE** ★

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Ooh La La

WHAT'S OLD IS NEW AND
MAGICAL AGAIN IN 'LA LA LAND'
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“ACCORDING TO THE LATEST INFORMATION THAT WE RECEIVED... MILITARY ACTIONS IN EASTERN ALEPPO ARE OVER. THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT HAS RE-ESTABLISHED CONTROL OVER EASTERN ALEPPO.”

— VITALY CHURKIN, RUSSIA'S U.N. AMBASSADOR

OUT OF ALEPPO

AMID REPORTS OF GOVERNMENT ATROCITIES, REBELS REACH CEASE-FIRE, EVACUATION DEAL

Associated Press

BEIRUT — Syrian rebels reached a cease-fire deal to evacuate from eastern Aleppo in an effective surrender on Tuesday, as Russia declared all military action had stopped and the Syrian government had assumed control of the former rebel enclave.

The dramatic developments, which appeared to restore the remainder of what was once Syria's largest city to President Bashar Assad's forces after months of heavy fighting and a crippling siege, followed reports of mass killings by government forces closing in on the final few blocks still held by the rebels.

Damascus confirmed the evacuation deal, and the U.N. envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, called for immediate access to the former rebel enclave to confirm the end of military operations and to oversee the safe departure of tens of thousands of civilians and opposition fighters. He was at the Security Council where an emergency meeting for Aleppo was underway.

Russia's U.N. ambassador Vitaly Churkin took to the floor near the end of the session at the U.N. Security Council to announce fighting had ended.

“According to the latest information that

we received ... military actions in eastern Aleppo are over,” Churkin said. “The Syrian government has re-established control over eastern Aleppo.”

Minutes earlier, he had announced that “all militants” and members of their families, as well as those wounded in the fighting, were being evacuated through “agreed corridors in directions that they have chosen voluntarily,” including the rebel stronghold of Idlib province.

As word spread of the deal, celebrations broke out in the government-controlled western sector of Aleppo.

Retaking Aleppo, which has been split between rebel and government control since 2012, would be Assad's biggest victory yet in the civil war. Aleppo, the country's former commercial powerhouse, has long been regarded as a major gateway between Turkey and Syria and the biggest prize in the conflict.

The agreement Tuesday came after world leaders and aid agencies issued dramatic appeals on behalf of trapped residents, and the U.N. human rights office said that pro-government forces reportedly killed 82 civilians as they closed in on the last remaining rebel areas.

That and other reports of mass killings, which could not be independently confirmed,

reinforced fears of atrocities in the final hours of the battle for the city.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told the emergency meeting he had received “credible reports” of civilians killed by intense bombing and summary executions by pro-government forces.

“To the Assad regime, Russia and Iran—three member states behind the conquest of and carnage in Aleppo—you bear responsibility for these atrocities,” U.S. Ambassador Samantha Power said.

Several residents and opposition activists told the AP that government forces carried out summary killings of rebels in neighborhoods captured on Monday, but the Syrian military denied the claim, saying such allegations were “a desperate attempt” to gain international sympathy.

None of the residents witnessed the alleged killings, and the reports came amid deepening chaos in the remaining rebel-held areas. Mohammed Abu Rajab, the administrator of the last remaining clinic in rebel-held parts of the city, said the dead and wounded were being left in the streets.

Bashar al-Ja'afari, Syria's ambassador to the United Nations, denied any mass executions

or revenge attacks, but added it was Syria's “constitutional right” to go after “terrorists,” a reference to all opposition fighters.

“Aleppo has been liberated from terrorists and those who toyed with terrorism,” he said. “Aleppo has returned to the nation.”

The U.N. children's agency said in a statement that it had received a report of more than 100 unaccompanied children trapped in a building under fire in eastern Aleppo. UNICEF is concerned over reports of “extrajudicial killings of civilians, including children,” said the agency's regional director, Geert Cappelaere.

A news release by the U.N. human rights office in Geneva said that multiple sources reported dozens of civilians were shot dead Monday by government forces and allied militiamen in eastern Aleppo.

A government win in Aleppo would significantly strengthen Assad's hand but does not end the conflict—significant parts of Syria are still outside government control, and huge swaths of the country are a devastated wasteland. More than a quarter of a million people have been killed since the conflict began in 2011 with peaceful protests against the Assad family's four-decade rule.

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How to avoid gift card woes

By Meg Graham | BLUE SKY INNOVATION

Gift cards seem to be the simple, stress-free ideal of gift-giving: No need to pick a style, size or color. They're not heavy to carry nor difficult to wrap. But buyers can still run into issues—like getting a card that registers a zero when they try to use it.

Here are some suggestions from the experts on how to gift-card in peace.

Be careful of secondhand cards. Secondary gift card marketplaces promise lower prices and give consumers and others a way to sell unwanted cards for cash. But the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center has warned consumers about the potential for fraud on such sites.

The Illinois attorney general's office is investigating Chicago-based startup Raise, one of the newer online marketplaces. A spokeswoman for the attorney general's office said it had received multiple complaints about cards that had a value of zero or less than what consumers paid for.

Cards are also sold on eBay, Craigslist and other sites.

But some experts advise only buying gift cards directly from retailers, either at the store or on the retailer's own secure website. Retailers may be more likely to dole out refunds after fraudulent activity if a consumer buys directly through them.

Know the type of card you're buying. Consumers can buy physical or digital gift cards, and some can be used only in a store or only online. If you're gifting a card, make sure it's in a form the recipient can actually use.

Secondary marketplaces also sell store-issued merchandise credits. Those credits can be legitimate, but can also be obtained when criminals steal items from stores, then return them without a receipt for a store credit. Customers who want to avoid buying those might be best off buying directly from retailers.

Be careful with physical gift cards, too.

Some criminals target physical gift cards at

stores, either writing down numbers or using a device to steal the card's information, said Tony Martin-Vegue, a San Francisco-based information security risk manager. He said thieves can take the information, return the cards to the shelves, keep tabs on the cards, then use them once a customer has legitimately purchased cards and activated them.

"I would never buy gift cards that are displayed out in the public—only from behind the counter," Martin-Vegue said.

He advises customers to give cards a quick scan for signs of tampering. If packaging is broken or a PIN is scratched off, don't buy it.

Big savings can be a red flag An especially deep discount—think 50 percent off the face value—could be a warning sign of a scam or a stolen card, Martin-Vegue said.



Story courtesy of Chicago Tribune's Blue Sky Innovation, featuring news, analysis and events related to innovation, entrepreneurship and the next Big Idea.

Use gift cards as soon as you can. Consumers should use gift cards quickly, said Steve Bernas, president and CEO of the Better Business Bureau of Chicago and Northern Illinois. Consumers can easily forget to use cards altogether, or could lose out if they wait too long and a company goes out of business.

Read the fine print. The Consumer Financial Protection

Bureau advises that customers read a card's policies carefully to determine whether it will incur fees. If a card hasn't been used in over a year, it may begin racking up inactivity fees, which are deducted from the card's value.

Keep the receipt handy. Whether you're giving a gift card or keeping it for yourself, experts advise keeping the receipt in case something goes awry. If a consumer has any problems with fraud on the card, retailers can often track where the card was purchased, activated and used.

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau advises that consumers who give cards as gifts also pass along the sales receipt as well as the terms and conditions information.



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When Thibs isn't yelling ...

By K.C. Johnson | CHICAGO TRIBUNE

ICYMI, former Bulls coach Tom Thibodeau returned to the United Center on Tuesday. It was the first time he showed up in that building as coach of the Minnesota Timberwolves, which still might seem strange for Bulls fans. Thibodeau held court with the media before Tuesday's game and was mostly reflective and appreciative of his former bosses, despite having left under less-than-ideal circumstances.

On his tenure with the Bulls: "When I look back, 90 percent of it was great. And everything in life, there's 10 percent that's not going to be perfect, and I think you learn from everything. So when I look back I think back positively of all that happened here."

"Overall, the organization treated me great. I have no regret. It was a great experience for me, and I'm looking forward to this challenge. I don't have a problem with those guys [John Paxson and Gar Forman]. I really don't. They have a job to do; I had a job to do. Unfortunately, we had some injuries along the way, and so it didn't end up maybe the way we all would have liked, but I don't have any problem with those guys."

On how he spent his yearlong sabbatical from the NBA: "The thing that year allowed me to do was to recharge, learn, reflect, so when you're in that type of setting, when you don't have a team, you have a much broader view of everything. So I would take things in, did things I normally don't do in a season. To go on vacation, visit with different people. And I was fortunate, I spent time with a lot of different organizations, but just not having a schedule was great. I ended up enjoying it a lot more than I thought I would, and I stayed [in Chicago]. I love the city, and it was easy for

me to move around from here."

On coaching the young Timberwolves: "I love the group that I have. ... We have three guys who are 21 years old who are averaging 20 points a game in the NBA. That's not an easy thing to do. They're driven, hard-working. I think we'll get better as we go along. Kris Dunn is starting to come on. But we have a lot of work to do."

On Jimmy Butler's dramatic improvement: "I don't think any of us could've said that we thought he would be who he is today, but we knew he would be good. We knew he would be a good rotation player. We knew that he was smart and tough and driven. And those guys always get better. And it's his dedication and commitment. Each year, he just keeps getting better and better."

On the direction the Bulls have gone since they parted ways: "One of the best parts about coaching in general is the afterlife is the best part of it. When you're going through a season, there's a lot that goes on. And then when you take a step back, I think about all the great experiences that we had and how hard that team played and how hard they worked and what kind of people they were. We had an opportunity to play New York, and it was great to see Joakim [Noah] and Derrick [Rose]. And of course coming here and working with Jimmy this summer, they're great guys. You try to do the best you can to help everyone, and they did the same for me. They gave me everything they had. I have great respect ... that team fought like crazy. No matter what the circumstances were, they always found a way to win. They played hard every night, they played tough, they played for each other, and we all benefited from it."

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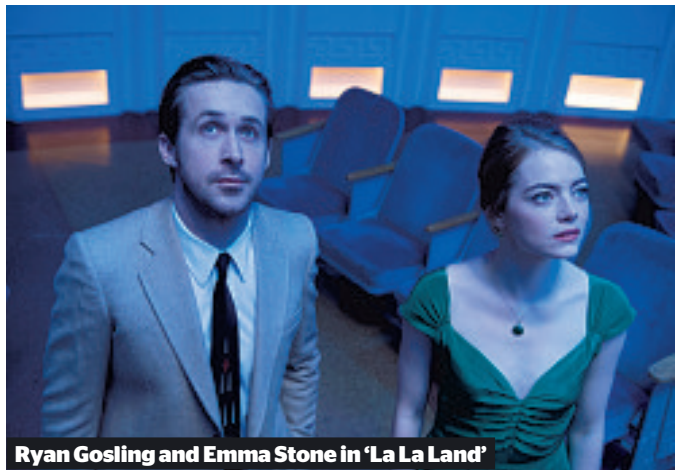
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Ryan Gosling and Emma Stone in 'La La Land'

Pure movie magic



Lauren Chval

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Almost everything you need to know about “La La Land” you learn in its first scene. A fluid camera moves between bumper-to-bumper cars on a Los Angeles highway, different songs from different radio stations floating through the air. One woman hops out of her car and begins to sing and dance in the road, and soon she’s joined by everyone. The camera soars and spins and dips on all these LA dreamers—despite the Southern California diversity, everyone’s story is more or less the same—and never cuts away. All at once, writer/director Damien Chazelle lets you know this story isn’t new, but he’s going to have a hell of a time telling it to you.

And you know the story: Mia (Emma Stone) is an actress and Sebastian (Ryan Gosling) is a musician, both struggling with the Hollywood scene. You already know they fall in love, but it’s how the story is told that makes “La La Land” special. As a musical, it simultaneously pays homage and breathes new life into one of the most traditional forms of cinema. It avoids feeling familiar or derivative by committing to every choice knowingly. As Mia gives a wrenching audition performance, Chazelle slowly zooms on her face but leaves enough room for us to see someone signaling to the casting agents in the background. It’s a cynical insider’s view of this world—you’re not watching the musical from the theater, but from the stage.

But the cynicism is necessary to hold the truly dreamy visuals and emotions that lift “La La Land” clear off the ground. Chazelle’s camera work is masterful, becoming one with the dizzying choreography of its dancers. The story itself is a bit of a dance, weaving two people together and stressing the importance of timing before coming back to a moment heavy with importance. Deliberate and magical, everything is supremely felt.

If there’s a flaw in “La La Land,” it’s that it’s a musical with two leads who aren’t singers. Gosling and Stone have perfectly fine voices but aren’t anything to write home about. But should anyone suggest they could have been swapped out, I insist there’s a rat-a-tat-tat to their dialogue and chemistry that couldn’t have been achieved by any other pair. Plus, as Sebastian says when he explains jazz to Mia, “You can’t hear it, you have to see it.” Singing isn’t the main event; it’s just one more thing that helps Stone and Gosling round out affecting, nuanced performances.

“La La Land” feels like a perfect movie. Turns out that’s all that really matters.

collaboration also requires compromise, and if too many concessions are made, is the original vision lost?

Chazelle has said that he didn’t have to sacrifice his concept of “La La Land” in the process of creating it, making him luckier than most. But as Mia and Sebastian pursue their dreams, the question of compromise vs. selling out is very present in the film. It’s a fine line, but I asked Chazelle and DeWitt if their own careers have taught them where it is.

“You’re too young to answer this question,” DeWitt told him, kidding. He answered anyway.

“As a filmmaker, one of the hardest things I’ve found, when you’re in the thick of the process, is to identify which changes are compromises and which are improvements,” Chazelle said. “It’s trying to find the balance between sticking to your guns and your vision so that the thing always remains the thing you want to make, but allowing it to get better. Allowing people who come in, who have their own experiences and their own expertise, whether it’s actors or a cinematographer or a musician or a dancer, whoever, to actually make you better and make the movie better.”

When our interview wrapped up and the two transitioned to their photo shoot, DeWitt took it upon herself to make Chazelle look his best in front of the camera. As a veteran of dozens of press tours and getting her picture taken, DeWitt moved with ease in front of the camera and began to pose Chazelle herself.

“This is your moment to be an actor!” she said.

She positioned him in front of her, placing her arms around his shoulders and joking that it would make him seem “hyper-masculine.”

“Shouldn’t the actor be front and center?” he protested, rather uncomfortably.

And even though his phone was no longer recording, perhaps Chazelle filed the moment away—another personal experience to find its way into a story.

@LCHVAL | LAURENCHVAL@REDEYECICAGO.COM

La Land” feels like something else. Despite its grandiosity, it manages to feel very small and personal, appealing to the shred of humanity you might have forgotten still exists inside you.

“That, to me, was what I didn’t understand while we were shooting,” DeWitt said. “We’re just being these people and loving each other and wrestling with each other, and that’s going to work? Then they’re just going to bust out into song? That to me is what’s a revelation about ‘La La Land,’ is the singing, when they do break out into song, it’s not corny. It doesn’t feel like, ‘Oh, here’s a number.’”

Chazelle gives all the credit to his actors for the humanity expressed by the film. Musicals are so choreographed that another director might have been tempted to completely pre-empt everything before anyone got on set,

but Chazelle said he didn’t want to think of the actors as pieces on a chess board.

“We knew this thing would have nice matte paintings and nice sunsets and stuff, but we didn’t want it to just be that,” Chazelle said. “I feel like the burden, in that sense, was really on the actors. Because it was probably easy in certain scenes to walk onto the set and feel like the whole thing could float off into the air, so I feel like you guys had to do a

lot of the legwork of actually grounding it.”

Movies, by nature, are collaborative efforts, requiring a lot to come together for the whole thing to work. This truth is taken to extraordinary heights in “La La Land,” where one misstep could have sent the whole thing crashing down (visually or emotionally). But



Damien Chazelle
director



Rosemarie DeWitt
actress

By Lauren Chval | REDEYE

Damien Chazelle makes things personal.

He began our interview by setting his phone down on the table and saying, “I’m recording, for my records.” He said it like he was kidding, but the recorder rolled on, capturing our conversation.

Maybe it’s part of his process. The 31-year-old writer/director’s 2014 film “Whiplash” was based on his high school experience in a competitive jazz band, and in his upcoming movie musical “La La Land,” Ryan Gosling stars as a jazz musician who can’t stand to see the art dying. Perhaps every interaction is a potential source of inspiration for Chazelle.

Or maybe he’s paranoid. I didn’t ask.

But it certainly seems as though Chazelle lives in his art. There is a scene early in “La La Land” when Gosling’s character, Sebastian, tries to sell Mia (Emma Stone) on jazz. You can’t just hear it, you have to see it, he says. In some ways, it felt like the pitch was coming directly from Chazelle.

“Looking at the movie now, it seems to be very much like me trying to convince people to like musicals,” he said. “Give them a chance! I guess it comes down to any art form that, for whatever reason, gets painted by society with a certain brush as being irrelevant or cheesy or old-fashioned or whatever. I think whether it’s jazz or musicals, I wanted this movie to do a little bit of selling in that way. So I guess Sebastian kind of takes up the mantle at that point.”

As Chazelle discussed his film, Rosemarie DeWitt sat on the other side of the couch, listening intently. DeWitt, who plays Sebastian’s sister, Laura, watched Chazelle as he spoke, weighing his answer before following up with her own question.

“Was this your hope?” she interjected. “That the audience would find some love for jazz and musicals?”

“Yeah!” Chazelle said. “First off, I think movies—especially the experience of going to a movie in a theater—can be very good. There’s good music movies, it almost doesn’t matter what they’re about. You can literally think you

hate all classical music but you go to see ‘A-ma-deus’ and suddenly you want to listen to nothing but Mozart. You can think you hate James Brown, you go see ‘Get on Up,’ you want to listen to James Brown. You can—”

“You can’t hate James Brown!” DeWitt interrupted. “Who hates James Brown?”

“In my mind, who hates jazz?” he countered. Their back-and-forth is reminiscent of “La La Land” itself, which is full of crackling dialogue and hinges on the concept of timing.

“Ryan [Gosling], the thing he kept talking about when we were rehearsing and prepping was this idea of timing,” Chazelle said. “In a way, the whole movie is about bad or good timing. When the timing lines up, you get a musical number. You get the literalization of being in sync. But for most of the movie, they’re just missing each other.”

Set in Los Angeles, “La La Land” portrays an aspiring actress and a struggling jazz musician trying to navigate both their dreams and a love story. As a musical, it

serves as an homage to a long-ago era in Hollywood, when Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire tap-danced across the screen in takes long enough to show off their impressive chops.

But though it takes inspiration from the Technicolor heyday of movie musicals and employs breathtaking visuals of its own, “La



As a filmmaker, one of the hardest things I’ve found, when you’re in the thick of the process, is to identify which changes are compromises and which are improvements. It’s trying to find the balance between sticking to your guns and your vision so that the thing always remains the thing you want to make, but allowing it to get better.”

—Damien Chazelle,
writer and director of “La La Land”

movies



All that jazz

‘LA LA LAND’
DIRECTOR, ACTRESS
DWELL ON THE SPELL
THE MOVIE CASTS

LENNY GILMORE/
REDEYE PHOTOS



LENNY GILMORE/
REDEYE PHOTOS

All that jazz

'LA LA LAND'
DIRECTOR, ACTRESS
DWELL ON THE SPELL
THE MOVIE CASTS



Damien Chazelle
director



Rosemarie DeWitt
actress

By **Lauren Chval** | REDEYE

Damien Chazelle makes things personal.

DHe began our interview by setting his phone down on the table and saying, “I’m recording, for my records.” He said it like he was kidding, but the recorder rolled on, capturing our conversation.

Maybe it’s part of his process. The 31-year-old writer/director’s 2014 film “Whiplash” was based on his high school experience in a competitive jazz band, and in his upcoming movie musical “La La Land,” Ryan Gosling stars as a jazz musician who can’t stand to see the art dying. Perhaps every interaction is a potential source of inspiration for Chazelle.

Or maybe he’s paranoid. I didn’t ask.

But it certainly seems as though Chazelle lives in his art. There is a scene early in “La La Land” when Gosling’s character, Sebastian, tries to sell Mia (Emma Stone) on jazz. You can’t just hear it, you have to see it, he says. In some ways, it felt like the pitch was coming directly from Chazelle.

“Looking at the movie now, it seems to be very much like me trying to convince people to like musicals,” he said. “Give them a chance! I guess it comes down to any art form that, for whatever reason, gets painted by society with a certain brush as being irrelevant or cheesy or old-fashioned or whatever. I think whether it’s jazz or musicals, I wanted this movie to do a little bit of selling in that way. So I guess Sebastian kind of takes up the mantle at that point.”

As Chazelle discussed his film, Rosemarie DeWitt sat on the other side of the couch, listening intently. DeWitt, who plays Sebastian’s sister, Laura, watched Chazelle as he spoke, weighing his answer before following up with her own question.

“Was this your hope?” she interjected. “That the audience would find some love for jazz and musicals?”

“Yeah!” Chazelle said. “First off, I think movies—especially the experience of going to a movie in a theater—can be very good. There’s good music movies, it almost doesn’t matter what they’re about. You can literally think you

hate all classical music but you go to see ‘Amadeus’ and suddenly you want to listen to nothing but Mozart. You can think you hate James Brown, you go see ‘Get on Up,’ you want to listen to James Brown. You can—”

“You can’t hate James Brown!” DeWitt interrupted. “Who hates James Brown?”

“In my mind, who hates jazz?” he countered. Their back-and-forth is reminiscent of “La La Land” itself, which is full of crackling dialogue and hinges on the concept of timing.

“Ryan [Gosling], the thing he kept talking about when we were rehearsing and prepping was this idea of timing,” Chazelle said. “In a way, the whole movie is about bad or good timing. When the timing lines up, you get a musical number. You get the literalization of being in sync. But for most of the movie, they’re just missing each other.”

Set in Los Angeles, “La La Land” portrays an aspiring actress and a struggling jazz musician trying to navigate both their dreams and a love story. As a musical, it serves as an homage to a long-ago era in Hollywood, when Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire tap-danced across the screen in takes long enough to show off their impressive chops.

But though it takes inspiration from the Technicolor heyday of movie musicals and employs breathtaking visuals of its own, “La

La Land” feels like something else. Despite its grandiosity, it manages to feel very small and personal, appealing to the shred of humanity you might have forgotten still exists inside you.

“That, to me, was what I didn’t understand while we were shooting,” DeWitt said. “We’re just being these people and loving each other and wrestling with each other, and that’s going to work? Then they’re just going to bust out into song? That to me is what’s a revelation about ‘La La Land,’ is the singing, when they do break out into song, it’s not corny. It doesn’t feel like, ‘Oh, here’s a number.’”

Chazelle gives all the credit to his actors for the humanity expressed by the film. Musicals are so choreographed that another director might have been tempted to completely pre-empt everything before anyone got on set, but Chazelle said he didn’t want to think of the actors as pieces on a chess board.

“We knew this thing would have nice matte paintings and nice sunsets and stuff, but we didn’t want it to just be that,” Chazelle said. “I feel like the burden, in that sense, was really on the actors. Because it was probably easy in certain scenes to walk onto the set and feel like the whole thing could float off into the air, so I feel like you guys had to do a lot of the legwork of actually grounding it.”

Movies, by nature, are collaborative efforts, requiring a lot to come together for the whole thing to work. This truth is taken to extraordinary heights in “La La Land,” where one misstep could have sent the whole thing crashing down (visually or emotionally). But

collaboration also requires compromise, and if too many concessions are made, is the original vision lost?

Chazelle has said that he didn’t have to sacrifice his concept of “La La Land” in the process of creating it, making him luckier than most. But as Mia and Sebastian pursue their dreams, the question of compromise vs. selling out is very present in the film. It’s a fine line, but I asked Chazelle and DeWitt if their own careers have taught them where it is.

“You’re too young to answer this question,” DeWitt told him, kidding. He answered anyway.

“As a filmmaker, one of the hardest things I’ve found, when you’re in the thick of the process, is to identify which changes are compromises and which are improvements,” Chazelle said. “It’s trying to find the balance between sticking to your guns and your vision so that the thing always remains the thing you want to make, but allowing it to get better. Allowing people who come in, who have their own experiences and their own expertise, whether it’s actors or a cinematographer or a musician or a dancer, whoever, to actually make you better and make the movie better.”

When our interview wrapped up and the two transitioned to their photo shoot, DeWitt took it upon herself to make Chazelle look his best in front of the camera. As a veteran of dozens of press tours and getting her picture taken, DeWitt moved with ease in front of the camera and began to pose Chazelle herself.

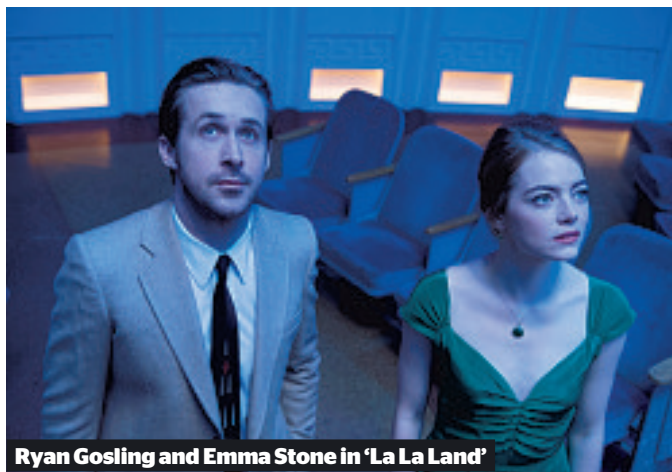
“This is your moment to be an actor!” she said.

She positioned him in front of her, placing her arms around his shoulders and joking that it would make him seem “hyper-masculine.”

“Shouldn’t the actor be front and center?” he protested, rather uncomfortably.

And even though his phone was no longer recording, perhaps Chazelle filed the moment away—another personal experience to find its way into a story.

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Ryan Gosling and Emma Stone in ‘La La Land’

Pure movie magic



Lauren Chval
» laurenchval@
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Almost everything you need to know about “La La Land” you learn in its first scene. A fluid camera moves between bumper-to-bumper cars on a Los Angeles highway, different songs from different radio stations floating through the air. One woman hops out of her car and begins to sing and dance in the road, and soon she’s joined by everyone. The camera soars and spins and dips on all these LA dreamers—despite the Southern California diversity, everyone’s story is more or less the same—and never cuts away. All at once, writer/director Damien Chazelle lets you know this story isn’t new, but he’s going to have a hell of a time telling it to you.

And you know the story: Mia (Emma Stone) is an actress and Sebastian (Ryan Gosling) is a musician, both struggling with the Hollywood scene. You already know they fall in love, but it’s how the story is told that makes “La La Land” special. As a musical, it simultaneously pays homage and breathes new life into one of the most traditional forms of cinema. It avoids feeling familiar or derivative by committing to every choice knowingly. As Mia gives a wrenching audition performance, Chazelle slowly zooms on her face but leaves enough room for us to see someone signaling to the casting agents in the background. It’s a cynical insider’s view of this world—you’re not watching the musical from the theater, but from the stage.

But the cynicism is necessary to hold the truly dreamy visuals and emotions that lift “La La Land” clear off the ground. Chazelle’s camera work is masterful, becoming one with the dizzying choreography of its dancers. The story itself is a bit of a dance, weaving two people together and stressing the importance of timing before coming back to a moment heavy with importance. Deliberate and magical, everything is supremely felt.

If there’s a flaw in “La La Land,” it’s that it’s a musical with two leads who aren’t singers. Gosling and Stone have perfectly fine voices but aren’t anything to write home about. But should anyone suggest they could have been swapped out, I insist there’s a rat-a-tat-tat to their dialogue and chemistry that couldn’t have been achieved by any other pair. Plus, as Sebastian says when he explains jazz to Mia, “You can’t hear it, you have to see it.” Singing isn’t the main event; it’s just one more thing that helps Stone and Gosling round out affecting, nuanced performances.

“La La Land” feels like a perfect movie. Turns out that’s all that really matters.

★★★★★
LA LA LAND
PG-13

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Andrew Bird

show up

6 MUST-SEE CHICAGO SHOWS THIS WEEK

By Josh Terry | REDEYE

We're almost done with 2016, and as we approach the holidays and bundle up for winter, it gets tough to gather up the energy to brave the cold and go to a show. Good thing there are so many good options this week throughout Chicago's venues. Weather shouldn't stop you from seeing these great acts.

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WEDNESDAY

The Cool Kids, Payroll Giovanni, Femdot

Thalia Hall

1807 S. Allport St. 312-526-3851

One of the most welcome Chicago hip-hop stories this year was the return of the iconic duo The Cool Kids. With a new album on the way rumored to be titled "Special Edition Grand Master Deluxe," their first since 2011, now's a perfect time to hit up Thalia Hall and remember why you loved them in the first place—not that you need reminding. Tickets: thaliahallchicago.com

WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY, FRIDAY

Andrew Bird

Fourth Presbyterian Church

126 E. Chestnut St.

Nothing says it's the holiday season quite like Andrew Bird's annual December residency at Chicago's Fourth Presbyterian Church. Dubbed the "Gezelligheid" series, after a Dutch word that loosely translates to "very, very cozy," the shows are an extra-intimate look at one of the most talented songwriters, violinists and whistlers around. It's essential viewing every single year. Tickets: Sold out.

FRIDAY, SATURDAY AND SUNDAY

Twin Peaks, Together PANGEA, Golden Daze (Friday)

Thalia Hall

1807 S. Allport St. 312-526-3851

Tickets: Sold out.

Twin Peaks, Together PANGEA, Jimmy Whispers, Golden Daze (Saturday)

Metro Chicago

3730 N. Clark St. 773-549-4140

Tickets: Sold out.

Twin Peaks, Post Animal, NOBUNNY (Sunday)

Thalia Hall

1807 S. Allport St. 312-526-3851

Twin Peaks are closing out their jam-packed 2016 with three homecoming shows. With Friday's and Saturday's Thalia Hall and Metro Chicago shows long sold out, the recently announced third gig at Thalia Hall is sure to follow suit. Though locals NOBUNNY and Post Animal are closing out the final date as support, Golden Daze and Together PANGEA are phenomenal live acts, so if you're lucky enough to have tickets for the first two shows, you're in for a treat. Tickets: thaliahallchicago.com

SATURDAY

Yeesh, Space Blood, Evasive Backflip

Cole's

2338 N. Milwaukee Ave. 773-276-5802

If you haven't heard of Chicago's Yeesh, now's the time to get on it. Their 2016 album "Confirmation Bias" (spoiler alert) is one of RedEye's favorite full-lengths of the entire year. Plus, Cole's on a Saturday always manages to be fun despite being packed to the brim.

Tickets: Free, 21+.



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\$3 Coors Light Pints



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Ceviche (\$12)

Sink Swim 3213 W. Armitage Ave. 773-486-7465

By **Michael Nagrant** | FOR REDEYE

One of my favorite new restaurants to open in 2015 was Sink Swim in Logan Square. One of my favorite TV shows back in 2006 was “Gilmore Girls.” These things may not seem related, but they are. Just because something is great doesn’t mean that it will last forever. “Gilmore Girls” was canceled in 2007, and the folks behind Sink Swim announced a change of course last month, leaning toward more casual, affordable eats. Founding chef Matt Danko left and was replaced by Mitch Cavanah (GT Fish & Oyster) earlier this month.

During the changing of the guard, chef de cuisine Nathan Whittaker held down the fort and retooled the menu away from luxurious caviar- and creme fraiche-studded oysters in favor of neighborhood-friendly fare such as crab mac ‘n’ cheese and broiled oysters with garlic butter and crisp bread-crumbs.

I expected dishes like these. What I didn’t expect was top-notch ceviche, a blend of silky avocado and luscious diced mahi mahi dripping with lime and jalapeno and mixed with a satisfying crunch courtesy of diced apple, fennel and fried pepitas (pumpkin seeds). The pepitas added a buttery, smoky crunch I’ve never experienced in a ceviche before.

“The dish draws on my experience working with Rick Bayless at Topolobampo, which is where I first learned how to make ceviche,” Whittaker said. “The addition of fried pepitas is a play on Peruvian ceviches adding concha to their versions. Concha is a toasted corn kernel, essentially another form of popcorn. I find pepitas have this crunch and deep toasted flavor that goes well with this autumnal ceviche.”

Thanks to the miracle that is Netflix, “Gilmore Girls” is back. And with a new chef getting settled and a killer ceviche on the menu, things are certainly looking up for Sink Swim.

MICHAEL NAGRANT IS A REDEYE CONTRIBUTOR.

REPORTERS VISIT RESTAURANTS UNANNOUNCED, AND MEALS ARE PAID FOR BY REDEYE.

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DECEMBER 17TH



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AFTER PARTY)

DECEMBER 31ST



MALA RODRIGUEZ:
NEW YEARS PARTY

DECEMBER 31ST



FUTURE ROCK:
(UMPHREY'S MCGEE
AFTER PARTY)

JANUARY 7TH



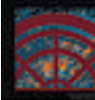
REAL FRIENDS & KNUCKLE
PUCK HOLIDAY SHOW

JANUARY 13TH



DIRKSCHNEIDER
W/ COLD BEARDED KILLERS,
PARADOXX & HESSLER

JANUARY 13TH



BOOMBOX:
(NIGHT ONE)

JANUARY 14TH



BOOMBOX:
(NIGHT TWO)

JANUARY 20TH



DATSIK (NIGHT ONE)
W/ DOCTOR P,
CRIZZLY & VIRTUAL RIOT

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puzzles

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

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TUESDAY'S SOLUTIONS

A	J	A	R	I	S	A	A	C	S	H	A	M
D	O	L	E	B	E	A	C	H	T	A	L	E
D	I	S	C	S	N	A	R	E	A	L	L	S
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D	O	N	T	E	V	A	D	E	C	O	N	E
E	N	D	S	S	A	N	E	R	O	W	E	D

TODAY IN THE YEAR ...

1799: George Washington, the first president of the United States, died.
1819: Alabama joined the Union as the 22nd state.
1946: The United Nations General Assembly voted to establish the U.N.'s headquarters in New York.
2012: 20 first-graders and six adults were killed in a shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn.

ACROSS

- 1 Debtor's note
- 4 Has a _-may-care attitude; is easygoing
- 9 Fly alone
- 13 Little kids
- 15 Banish
- 16 "Once _ a time..."
- 17 Argument
- 18 _ a halt to; stops
- 19 Annoying one
- 20 Not even embarrassed
- 22 Bump _; meet unexpectedly
- 23 Fishing worm, for example
- 24 Very long time
- 26 Trix spokesman
- 29 Abridge; make smaller
- 34 Felt sick
- 35 Curtsied
- 36 _ flash; instantly
- 37 Pitt or Garrett
- 38 Two- _; betrayed
- 39 Sign of a past surgery
- 40 Sleeper's place
- 41 Possessed
- 42 Coil of yarn
- 43 Dreamer; unrealistic one
- 45 Necklace beads
- 46 Become firm
- 47 Tap a golf ball
- 48 Drill a hole
- 51 Cross, as two highways might
- 56 Large kitchen appliance
- 57 VP Al & his kin
- 58 Unusual
- 60 _ as a pin
- 61 Japanese 3-line poem
- 62 Murdered
- 63 Goes astray
- 64 " _ Were the Days"
- 65 Charge

1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12
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48	49	50			51	52	53				54	55	
56					57					58			59
60					61					62			
63					64						65		

DOWN

- 1 " _ a boy!"
- 2 Fumbler's word
- 3 Provo's state
- 4 Trickery
- 5 Praise highly
- 6 Contemptible
- 7 Woes
- 8 Decreased
- 9 Lying flat
- 10 Unlocked
- 11 Nowhere to be found
- 12 Hold _; keep
- 14 Used a fork, perhaps
- 21 Housekeeper
- 25 Like 1, 3, and 5
- 26 Temple leader
- 27 Televised
- 28 Part of a sword
- 29 One of Santa's reindeer
- 30 Was in the red
- 31 More pleasant
- 32 Slow crawler
- 33 Makes money
- 35 Canisters
- 38 Early evening
- 39 Ice rink figures
- 41 Vaudevillian _ Olsen
- 42 _ up; arranges
- 44 Insurance policy sellers
- 45 Follow; chase
- 47 Takes a quick look
- 48 Ulna or scapula
- 49 Finished
- 50 Raise, as kids
- 52 Ark builder
- 53 Threesome
- 54 Baby cow
- 55 Cottonwood or cypress
- 59 Female sheep

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20 21 22 23 24 25 26

27 28 29 30

December

SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT

1 2 3

4 5 6 7 8 9 10

11 12 13 14 15 16 17

18 19 20 21 22 23 24

25 26 27 28 29 30 31

January

SUN

1

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THE QUOTE

“It was bittersweet, if I’m being 100 percent honest. I was like, this is dope as hell, but it sucks that my name is the only one associated with all the hard work that everybody put in. ‘Cause I want everybody to know that our showrunners are dope, our director’s dope, our writers are dope, our cast is amazing. So it’s like that—and, the other end, I’m like, ‘Mutha[bleep]a, I got a Golden Globe nomination!’ So it’s both.”

—“Insecure’s” **Issa Rae**, in a chat with Vulture, on her reaction to her Golden Globe nomination for best actress for her work on the HBO show. Rae writes, produces and acts in the show, which just finished its eight-episode inaugural run.



O Christmas tree

Prince Harry and actress **Meghan Markle** bought their first Christmas tree together on Monday in London, according to People. ‘Tis the season for adorable outings, right? The two bought a \$70 tree, because royalty only deserves the best—and can afford to splurge on a \$70 dead tree that’ll rot away in their living room.



The fittest couple you ever did see

Olympic gymnast **Aly Raisman** has been secretly seeing tight end Colton Underwood since the VMAs in August, according to People. Underwood, a former Oakland Raider who’s now a free agent, asked Raisman out in August over social media, like any good millennial would. The two made it red-carpet official at the Sports Illustrated Sportsperson of the Year Ceremony on Monday. It’s almost unpatriotic if they don’t procreate for the sake of the U.S.’s future Olympic teams.

Aqua-douche

According to Deadline, **Patrick Wilson** has been cast as Aquaman’s evil half-brother Orm, or Ocean Master, in the Warner Bros. film due out in 2018 that stars Jason Momoa as the titular superhero. Yes, the two look nothing alike. No, Warner Bros. doesn’t give a damn. Orm will give Aquaman hell as a rival for the throne of Atlantis, if the comics are any indication.



Not quite Jon Snow

Fox has ordered a new family comedy from men who worked on “New Girl” and “It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia,” two shows on very opposite ends of the comedy spectrum. “The Bastard” will be written by Rob Rosell and David Hornsby and will follow Warren, a hotel janitor who finds out he’s the bastard son of the hotel chain’s wealthy founder, Deadline reports. Getting some strong bastard of Winterfell vibes, yeah?

GETTY IMAGES FILE PHOTOS

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